

# Faith and beliefs in religion

[Life](#), [Love](#)



What is needed is essentially a gap, to show that aspects of rational thinking can coincide with faith. So the question must be asked; can faith and reason coincide? It is absolutely possible for rational thinking to be a part of faith, or more particularly religious faith. The only point in which faith is irrational, is the initial leap of faith one takes in order to make the decision. Besides this initial jump of blind faith, where one must fully trust a higher power without complete understanding, every decision after this seemingly irrational one, has the full capacity for rational thought.

Often times thoughts, beliefs, and actions are often labeled as rational or irrational, but what defines something as rational? Rationality is defined as a pursuit of knowledge through the use of logical discourse and objective criteria. What comes out of this pursuit is what humans tend to think is rational. Generally speaking, rationality is what is "best on the table", its purpose is to provide or attempt to provide, answers to questions based on factual evidence and through the use of logical discourse and scientific advancements. With scientific advances, what is considered rational and irrational shifts as well.

It is through new, changing evidence that alters rationality. This is why rationality changes throughout the course of time, it is because new evidence is provided therefore changing the belief of what is considered rational and what is considered to be irrational. Through the course of increased logical discourse and time, rationality and what one deems something as rational will continually evolve. Faith on the other hand, is belief that provides the best possible answers based on scriptures and attempts to

address the questions that science cannot. It's there to provide the questions such as, "Why am I here? Or "What's my purpose on this earth?". This is the reason for why many accept religion and faith into their lives. Many times humans desire for purpose and reason for their lives. The theory of Existentialism and the brilliant minds of Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre, articulate that humans possess an innate desire to create purpose in one's life. This wanting for purpose is satisfied through religion. Ultimately science answers the how, and faith answers the why it provides the purpose of everything in life, and the very essence of humans and their ultimate purpose.

It is evident that science deems that faith and reason are on the same page and essentially can be compared. However it is argued that the faith system and the pursuit of rational answers to the universe are not on the same page. In fact, Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project states, "God gave us an opportunity through science to understand the natural world, but there will never be a scientific proof of God's existence" (Collins). It illuminates the fact that science is there not to contradict religion, but is there for the purpose of further understanding the world we live in.

Its purpose is not to disprove religion, but instead to deepen our knowledge of the what we have already, the earth. It further supports the point that rational thinking and religion belong in two different domains and shows that the two are essentially two different scopes of looking at the world, from a spiritual standpoint and both a rational standpoint.

Furthermore Stephen Jay Gould, a famous evolutionary biologist suggests

of the existence of impoverishing magisterial (Gould). Gold's theory also known as (NOAA) state that science and faith have separate teaching domains.

This dissonance means that the findings and claims of both domain do not have to contradict each other. Progress in science does not have to disprove the teachings of religion. In the same way religion does not have to control every aspect of one's life. It demonstrates that besides the initial leap of faith, what follows after has the potential to be rational as the existence of faith and rationally relate to two different domains. This is what it means to coexist separately. Therefore the progress of rational thinking and science should not interfere with faith and vice versa.

Essentially these two different domains are two different ways to come closer to, or attaining the Truth in their own respective fields. The assertion that faith does not cloud or bleed into the course of logical thinking is made and emphasized quite heavily. In essence, the ideology that religion's belief hinders one from rational thinking is disproved as it's heavily asserted that the two belong in very different ballparks. Francis Collins, also indirectly refers to this theory of Gold's magisterial with the statement, "I was in a very reductionism frame of mind.

They state often what science imposes upon your thought process, and it's a good thing when you apply it to the natural world. But I sought to apply it to everything else. Obviously the spiritual world is another entity'. Collins admits that despite his numerous amount of years of science b 10th at Yale

and the Human Genome Project, that the two domains of science and religion were is imply not meant to Kim 4 compliment or contradict each other. Ultimately, one can simply both be a sic intestine and a believer. Furthermore, it shows that both domains are indeed there and the d main of faith does not prevent progress through rational thinking.

Therefore, when one claims t o believe, rational hinging is still present, because of the simple fact that the two belong in differ rent domains or region of thinking. There are of course the rare occasions when faith and reason do come together ere. This does not mean, however, that religion disproves rational thinking. Before the age o f Columbus, the rational way of thinking included the belief that the world was flat. A very pop alular and highly controversial idea at the time, both rationality and religion produced the Sam e conclusion, that the world indeed was flat.

This shows that despite the defined boundaries bet when reason and oath, that both can also hover on the same ideals. In the example of the world d being flat, both science and religion conformed to rational thinking that the world was flat (re member that rationality is what the best possible answer is based on the facts provided). D goes this not show that religion does not devalue rational thinking? It shows that religion does no t shun rational thinking, but rather is also another way of attaining the Truth.

Thomas Aquinas s argues that faith and reason are just rather two methods but are related in that nature is sees initially God and the study of nature is to study God (Planting). Another instance where reason an d faith collide, is

the theory of egocentricity. Rational thought at the time supported the geocentric theory based on the given evidence of past scholars. The institution who heavily supported this theory was none other than the Catholic Church. This can be seen as an act of irrationality that the Church did not base their decisions on the given evidences.

However, this is not true as the works of supporters of the heliocentric theory remained hidden and censored, until well after their own lifetime. Once these works were discovered rationality would be altered as people now see that the Sun is the center and not the earth based on the provided evidence. It also goes to show that rationality changes over time and ultimately takes time to change as evidence grows. Religion is seen as a concoction filled with emotion, and what better way to shield oneself from rational thinking than to incorporate emotions?

When one's emotions start to take control, one's thoughts and actions often become irrational. This being said, emotion and SE mentality often follow religion and faith, however even bigger than emotion, is action. Actions are a crucial part in almost every religion or philosophy. Without action nothing is achieved. As actions play a pivotal role in religion, emotions are irrelevant and can even be discouraged in faith. Many times religion is institutionalized due to the supposed use of emotions and how heavily religion relies on emotion. However this is not true at all.

The basis of religion is not solely based on emotions, but rather the actions and the strength or intimacy of faith that the individual carries. This goes to

say however, that emotions aren't completely shunned by religion, some are encouraged while others are discouraged completely. In Christianity the Ten Commandments that God provides humans with a set of guidelines that provided to the Israeli test the knowledge of certain actions and their moral values. It leaves out any aspect of emotion and are essentially just rules of what to do and what not to do.

The word "do" immediately incisor orates actions and certain acts but not emotions. Through an Eastern scope, the belief of actions and karma are a prime example. Furthermore religion goes about to shun certain emotions the at often bring about negative actions from humans through the verse "A fool gives full vent to his s rid, but a wise man quietly holds it back" (Proverbs 29: 1 1). This popular verse depicts the rest train upon which Christianity places upon an individual. It shuns the expression of one's emotion NSA especially Kim 6 anger.

Such restrictions on emotions are also present in Eastern philosophies and religions. In the religion of Hinduism, the discharge of emotions is evident. The fundamentals of Hinduism state that emotions hinder one from reaching the point of enlightenment. Further more emotions produce certain detrimental desires within an individual that prevents the par TTY from seeing the Truth; that emotions and personal desires are meaningless. Yes, religion does shun some emotions but not all emotions. Emotions such a shappinessand euphoria are encouraged.

But most if not all religions possess a unifying element of love and compassion (Jesus in Christianity, Shattered in Buddhism etc. ). Such a connection begs to answer the question of whether or not such feelings incite irrational thinking, or if they're even emotions at all. Love is characterized by physical objects and actions. In a religious aspect the acts of Jesus Christ symbolize God's supposed love. If love is characterized by such acts, it's more than safe to say that love is indeed an action and not an emotion. Love is shown through actions that symbolize the level of love that one possesses.

But the deepest level of love is through sacrifice: and sacrifice is an action, therefore linking the connection between love and actions. Through sacrifice one learns the value of love, and the greater the sacrifice the greater strength of love. However many believe that love is irrational, and that it is perfectly true, love itself is irrational, but the reasons why humans are rational according to social relationships is explained by Aristotle's statement, "Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than a human" (Rack).

This quote shows that humans want if not need social interactions, such actions which include the essence of love. Therefore the need for love and further social interactions are justified as being rational. This justifies the rationality of why one chooses to love, or to embrace Kim 7 the concept of love. This unifying element of love also carries the implication that morally sound actions are heavily encouraged. The certain encouragement of

morally sound behavior can be seen throughout all religions. The Buddhists describe this as dharma, and the Western belief perceives it as the Ten Commandments.

The fact that such diverse religions can come together on a single consensus that morally sound actions are essential to one's faith, provokes yet another question; the question of how such a phenomena can occur. Based on the difference of the origins of these religions, it goes about to show that religions appeal to the common interest of people. This however, does not explain how or why certain extremists act the way they do. In such cases religion is seen as providing actions that resort to irrational actions.

First off, remember that such extremists represent only a very small number of certain religious beliefs. Secondly, the actions of such extremists are fueled by their own interpretation. Therefore, if the definition of rationality is defined as the product of the pursuit of knowledge, the interpretations of certain texts is one's own pursuit of knowledge. The late novelist and essayist D. H. Lawrence states, "The human being is a most curious creature." (Lawrence). The justification of such interpretations is essentially supported by this statement by Lawrence.

The interpretations of texts differ as different sects offer different answers to certain curiosities. Furthermore, if an extremist no matter how extreme, is given the question of what is two plus two, the answer will inevitably be four. Ultimately they would know and understand how and why two and two

is four, even if they've never encountered the question before. They can prove that wrought the pursuit of logical thinking can they not? If they are capable of such actions it shows that rational thinking is still present despite whatever faith they believe in.